

STRASBURG AFTER THE SURRENDER.

SHORTLY after the capitulation, on the 28th of September, I started for Strasburg. The city had been free to visitors only two days, yet all South Germany seemed to be on a pilgrimage thither. "Pilgrimage" is the very word, for that implies a sacred shrine to be visited; and the longing of the Germans after the old "free city of the Holy Roman Empire" is akin to religious devotion. When they spoke of defeating the French army, capturing the French Emperor, besieging the French capital, a defiant, warlike tone pervaded their language; but during the siege of Strasburg not a German alluded to that subject without a sigh at the cruel necessity, and a hope that "the loftiest German cathedral" might not be injured. When the news came that the General who had so bravely defended his post felt compelled to surrender, there was no such exultation as follows an ordinary victory. Every one was glad, but apparently more rejoiced that the city had not been stormed, than that it had been captured. Personal friends of mine had special reasons for regarding the place with affection, and yet every German seemed to share their sentiments. It would take an army stronger than any now existing to overcome this feeling: brotherly and pitiful towards Strasburg, and yet tenaciously wrathful against the nation which has held it for so many years. Should the city remain German, its inhabitants will

probably be discontented; but should it be given back to the French, all Germany will be wounded in a matter of sentiment; and matters of sentiment transcend diplomacy as well as logic. Bismarck is a bold man, but not bold enough to venture such a step.

This comes first to account for the crowd I met hurrying to the same point with myself. Some went on business, in all probability; some out of mere curiosity—the latter mostly foreigners; but the mass of the Germans went to see with their own eyes what remained of the city of their desires; to realize that Strasburg and its cathedral were German again; to tread the other bank of the Rhine and feel that it was no longer French. It was oftentimes poetical feeling; it was always that undefined thing the Teutons call *Geist*, and it was contagious withal. American by birth and education, I cannot write of my visit without consciously sharing the sentiment. My neighbor in the railway coupé had never been farther from home in his life. He did not go on business, nor was he rich, for he carried his supply of bread and Goettinger sausage in his pocket; yet he must see Strasburg. Opposite me was a venerable Professor of Theology, as eager to reach the place as a boy to get home on the first holiday. Another fellow-traveler was too afflicted in eyesight to see much at his journey's end, but he wanted to feel that he was in German Strasburg.



DISMOUNTED GUNS IN THE CITADEL SQUARE.

It was bright mid-day when the train stopped at Kehl. We were obliged to alight at the old station, about a quarter of a mile from the town. Ten years ago, before the railway bridge was finished, knapsack on my back and alpenstock in hand, I had stepped off from the same station, on my return from a long pedestrian tour in Switzerland. Then a single omnibus was sufficient to transfer all the passengers to Strasburg, except those of us who from habit preferred to walk. Now it was very different,—indescribably different. The roads were blocked with vehicles, even the adjoining fields being turned into provisional cab-stands. Omnibuses, cabs, hackney-coaches; last, and most numerous of all, primitive farm-wagons from the Black Forest were standing there in seemingly inextricable

confusion. There must have been hundreds of the last-named vehicles, yet I saw none start away empty.

In one of these, every seat full, we crept towards and through Kehl. Our charioteer was willing enough to go faster, but speed was as much out of the question as in a train of loaded army wagons, or on Cortland street after a snow-storm, in the old times. We thus had an opportunity of noticing the effects of the French bombardment on this defenceless place. There can be no excuse for the destruction of this unwalled and ungarrisoned town; but a grave old Prussian has raked up from past records a fact which gives the event a retributive character. He told me: "When all Germany was illuminated, in 1813, on account of the defeat of Napoleon I., Kehl

alone, among German cities, remained in darkness. Now the nation with which it unrighteously sympathized has desolated it." In fact, it has profited most by its proximity to the French border; smuggling being systematically carried on. Yet it has paid dear for this position. This is the seventh time it has suffered from military operations, since Strasburg was appropriated by Louis XIV.

The handsome railway depot is a complete ruin. It stands on an elevated position at the German end of the bridge, closing the vista as one looks down the main street in Kehl. Here unfortunate travelers were delayed and annoyed by a custom-house examination. An American I know of, passing through on his wedding trip, came very near *not* passing through. Forced to get a new ticket, he must needs take such a roundabout way to avoid the possibility of smuggling, that on reaching the platform again he saw the train starting off with his bride. Love, however, achieves wonders, even enabling a man

to get on a European railway train when in motion.

The pontoon bridge was already restored, and it was as full of pedestrians as Wall street at a quarter of three in the afternoon. The old bridge, I remember well, had two political planks in the centre. On the end of one was cut *Baden*, on that of the other, *France*. The restored bridge has no such line of demarcation, and it is no longer possible, by standing on either side of it, to be in two countries at once, and yet on the Rhine. What a grand river it is! Here, with no mountains to adorn it, no ruined castles to cast the spell of legend upon it, its bright rushing waters seem as winsome as where they whirl around the Loreley's crag. The draw of the railway bridge, on the German side, was blown up in July last. An unnecessary work of destruction, many now think; but then there was every reason to expect that the French army would cross it and overrun Baden, which was well-nigh defenceless. The



BEHIND THE WALL EAST OF THE STEINTHUR.

damage done does not seem very great, but the removal of the *débris* will be a difficult task. On the further bank there is a ruin on either side; neither a subject of regret. First comes the police bureau, where passports, *visé* by a French consul, were once rigorously demanded; then the custom-house, where the first French sentry was posted, and where I once had to wait until past midnight because my traveling companion, being an amateur photographer, had taken a camera with him, which was seized by the officials. It is difficult to say which party demolished these buildings.

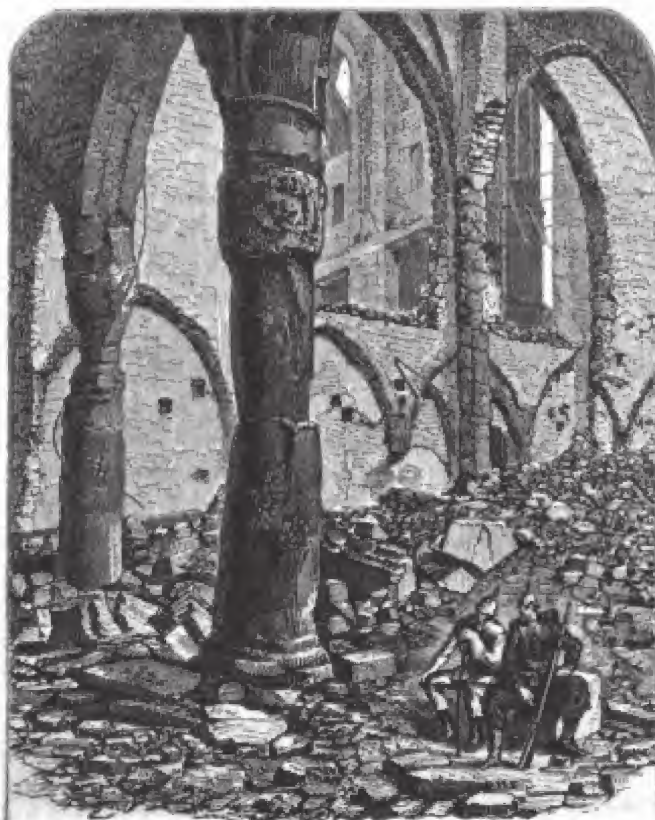
An old Suabian Judge had remarked to me but the day before, that, next to the human lives, the most irreparable loss occasioned by this war was that of the *trees*. The ride to Strasburg confirmed this notion. This avenue was once so shady, but now, with the exception of the few rods nearest the bridge, the whole road is denuded. Hundreds of trees, which had weathered the fifteen political storms of France, have been wantonly cut down. This was done by the French themselves, in order to hinder the German advance; but three days

sufficed to remove the obstacles, and the Badensers marched on to the Vosges without waiting to clear the roads in rear of Strasburg. The French taste for barricades, rural as well as urban, is a very costly one.

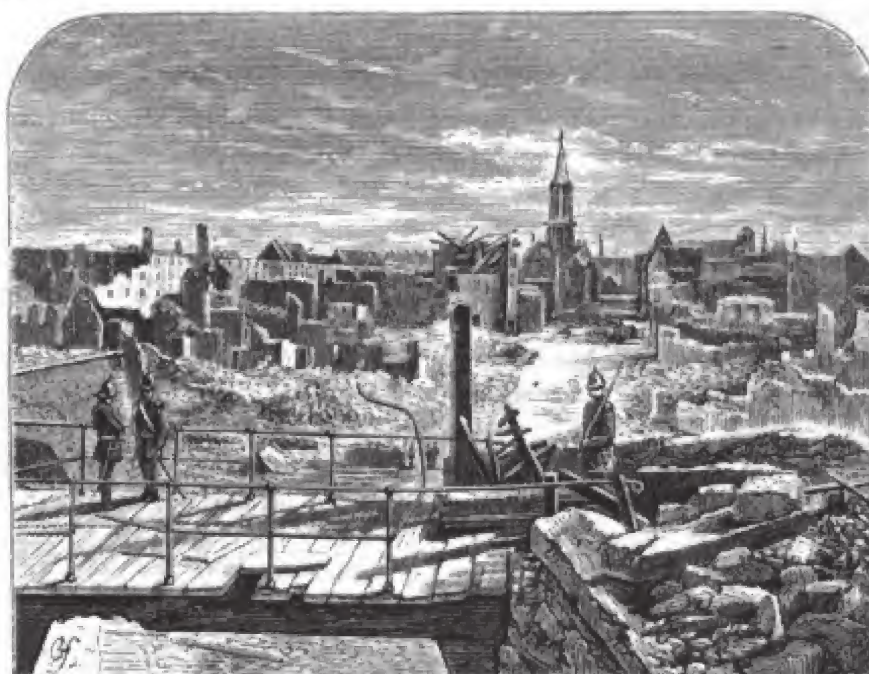
The remains of the citadel were soon visible; but only from within can one form any idea of the thorough work of demolition effected by the German artillery on this celebrated fortress. Indeed, from whatever direction Strasburg is approached, owing to the flatness of the plain, the view seems to be the same: strong walls, and towering above them an immense cathedral. But to-day that grand old spire, higher than St. Peter's, overtopped but a little by the great Pyramid itself, looks as it never did before. The pinnacle is slightly bent, but it takes sharp eyes to discover that, while he must be nearly blind who does not notice two flags waving from the tower, large enough to be undwarfed by the huge edifice itself. Very significant flags, moreover. These methodical Germans have a purpose in what they do. One is the black and white standard of the Prussians, the other the black, white, and red of the North German Union.

They mean more than that Strasburg is captured; they give a hint as to her future. We might have looked for the black, red, and gold, the old German colors; or at least for the red and yellow ensign of the brave Badensers, who did most of the work outside the walls. But no, the Prussians intend to assert by this choice of flags that Strasburg and the Alsace will be joined most closely to Prussia, or at least to North Germany, which amounts to the same thing. Baden is nothing loath, for the ultramontane Alsatians would only disturb its liberal government, and the accession of territory would give still more difficult frontier duty in the Vosges, after the long years that it has stood guard opposite the French bank of the Rhine.

So here are Prussians on duty at the Austerlitz gate, by which we enter the city. They seem at home in the guard-house; but these French civic officials, who used to collect the *octroi* dues, look as if they would like to levy very severe



INTERIOR OF THE NEW CHURCH.

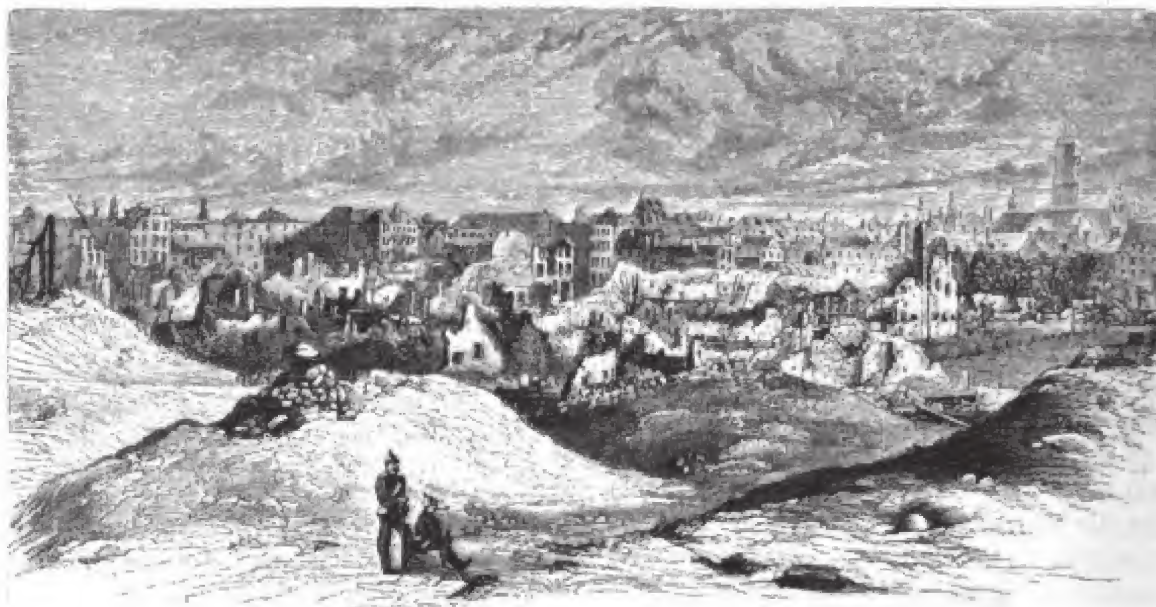


VIEW FROM THE STEINTOR, LOOKING UP THE STEINSTRASSE.

contributions from this mass of humanity streaming by them undisturbed. Here we must alight; to drive farther is an impossibility. The peasantry of Upper Baden seems to be here *en masse*—babies, provisions, horses, wagons, and all. No signs as yet of the work of destruction; but let us push on if we can. Emerging from the throng at last, we ask a *commissionnaire* to conduct us to a hotel. No rooms to be had, is the response of a waiter who consents to answer us. Hundreds have been turned away already, all willing to pay twenty francs for a single bed. It is no better elsewhere. But we are hungry, and determine to eat our dinner here. The dining-hall is full; yet, after waiting a little, we secure seats. Ventilation is secured by the fact that some of the windows have been demolished by a stray shot, which ended its career in the largest mirror on the premises. We amuse ourselves, while waiting for our soup, by looking out on the Place Kleber. Three sides of the rectangle are comparatively uninjured, but along the fourth is a complete ruin. This edifice was the bureau of the French commandant. Whatever the bombs may have effected, it was the evident purpose of those firing them to demolish every military building in the city, and they have done this—and more too.

After a scanty, but expensive dinner, I started in search of lodgings. Having been commissioned by some German friends to inquire whether the housekeeper of a deceased relative had survived the siege, I sought her humble dwelling, and fortunately obtained the promise of quarters for myself and two others of the party. Asking, as in duty bound, after her state of health, she replied: "Thank God, I am alive; but six weeks passed in a cellar, part of the time with no meat but horseflesh, is not very agreeable." I hinted that Strasburg would now remain unharmed under German protection, but received such a rebuff that I deemed it best to abstain from such allusions, if I would be on good terms with my hospitable landlady. Yet this woman could not speak French, had her warmest friends in Germany, and called all who could not understand the horrible Alsatian German, "foreigners." But she was born under French rule, and her son had been in the National Guard.

Not far from her house stands the church of St. Thomas, the most celebrated Protestant place of worship in the Alsace. Here Oberlin is buried, and here is the beautiful monument to Marshal Saxe, which no visitor to Strasburg leaves unseen. The church has passed through the bombardment almost un-



VIEW FROM THE RAMPARTS NEAR THE BREACH.

scathed. Indeed, that whole quarter of the city has suffered but little.

Most travelers, in times of peace, approach Strasburg by rail, entering the city between the Saverne gate and the "Steinthor." The great destruction was in the district between these gates and the canal on which the depot fronts. The lines of the fire seem to have converged on the Cathedral, extending over a semicircle from the Saverne gate on the north-west to the citadel on the south-east; the most important points aimed at being the Steinthor, where the breach was made, and the citadel itself. The general direction of the fortifications between these two points forms a straight line, behind which the work of destruction has been thorough. The annexed view is from this district.

Prussia is the first Protestant power in Europe, and yet the Catholic Cathedral and its adjuncts were spared as much as possible by her batteries, while the Protestant "New Church," and the various buildings of a literary character connected with it, were utterly ruined. This singular fact is readily accounted for. The besiegers could see little else than the Cathedral, and their fire was in a great measure guided by that landmark. The highest point between some of their most important batteries and the Cathedral was occupied by the cluster of buildings already alluded to. In fact, from the whole north-west

front of their earthworks shots, flying over the Steinthor and falling short of the Cathedral, would usually strike somewhere in this ill-fated neighborhood. The destruction of the library is a great calamity, since it contained many manuscripts and rarities that cannot be replaced. The Germans have already begun to make collections for its restoration; it is therefore incredible that it was wantonly destroyed.

The New Church is only five or six hundred years old. It contained the monument of the celebrated preacher, John Tauler, who died in 1361, one hundred and fifty years before the Reformation. So spiritual were his discourses that he has warm admirers among the Protestants of to-day, and a large edition of his sermons has been circulated in America within the past few years.

The Prussians are quite practical in their regulations. No sooner did numbers of visitors appear in Strasburg than the military authorities began to sell tickets of admission to the more interesting parts of their work of demolition. It was a measure of prudence, for otherwise their sentries would have had difficulty in the performance of their duty; and of benevolence as well, for the money is devoted to the relief of the sufferers by the bombardment.* The price, a Prussian thaler,

* The larger cities throughout Germany have voted liberal amounts for the same purpose. The first for-

is high for Germans, yet the number sold averaged seven hundred per day shortly after the surrender.

The first place to be thus visited is the *Stein thor*. Scarcely a house remains within five minutes' walk of this point. The Germans had captured two outworks, numbered 52 and 53 on the plan of Strasburg, and pushing a crown-work in front of these, evidently intended to storm through the breach they had made by their cannonade. No easy task! My own impression is, that had the city been well garrisoned and well provisioned it could have held out much longer, and that, as it was, the capture by storm would have cost the besiegers dearly. That question must be settled by military critics, and I may be entirely wrong, since in this war precisely the most unexpected events have occurred. Still I may venture to affirm that the siege of Strasburg was marked by very few striking incidents. The sorties were weak and easily repulsed, while the nature of the siege operations afforded little opportunity for brilliant deeds of heroism. Two cannon were captured on one occasion by a party under the command of a young lieutenant from Heidelberg, who received "the Iron Cross" for his gallantry. Poor fellow, he did not wear it long. While I was in Strasburg, the Badensers, who had been chafing under their delay in the trenches, whipped the French in the open field near St. Dié, in the Vosges, and among the first victims on the German side was Lieut. Von Stipplin.

Strasburg was never besieged before, so that we have no data for an exact comparison; but undoubtedly the besiegers did their work with unusual rapidity. In six weeks they finished three parallels, took two out-

mal act of the Governor-General of the Alsace, after his public reception in Strasburg by the city authorities, was to hand to the mayor a purse of 5,000 thalers, donated by the King of Prussia for the relief of the sufferers. According to the published appeal of the mayor, Professor Kness, of the academic medical faculty, the number of persons rendered houseless by the effects of the bombardment exceeds 6,000, and the losses must be reckoned by millions. It is to be hoped that this appeal, which is addressed to the benevolent of all lands, has evoked in our country the generous response so readily given by Americans.

works, and were ready to storm. This characteristic is due largely to the eagerness of the troops. But there is yet another one, which is not brilliant, furnishing little matter for the newspaper reporter, and yet the most certain and terrible peculiarity which can attend a successful siege; I mean the precision of the German fire. Here the scientific character of their warfare appears; and against this cool, steady, crushing method, based on superior knowledge, mere enthusiasm, or even heroism, avails little. They planted their pieces at the proper places, to do a certain work—and it was done. A view of the interior of the citadel is sufficient to show the skill with which they handled their cannon. This citadel was built by the celebrated Vauban, and had been strengthened whenever a war-cloud appeared on the Rhine. It was the strongest fortress in France, the pride of her engineers, and yet it was battered to pieces: there was no safety to be found behind its ramparts, save by burrowing under the earth.*

The Germans can spare it; their citadel should be placed on the west side of the town.

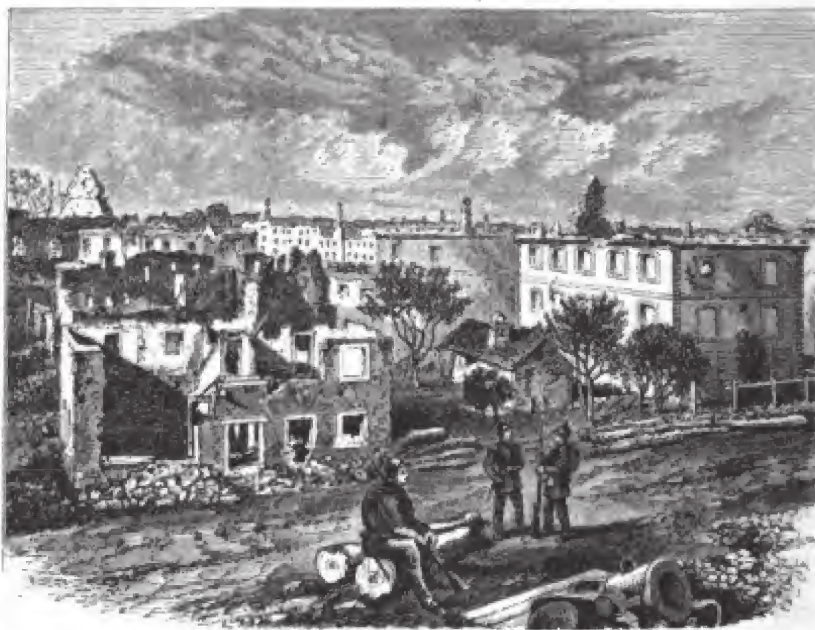
As already intimated, the Cathedral was spared as much as possible; but since the French used it as a watch-tower it could not remain untouched. The amount of rubbish lying outside the walls, and especially at the foot of the tower, shows that it must have been struck repeatedly. So immense is the edifice, however, that only upon closer inspection is the injury perceptible. Within, the damage is more noticeable. One grand old

* Those curious in regard to such matters may notice the following statistics, derived from official sources:—The number of guns of all kinds employed was 241: 44 of these were used by the Badensers against the citadel; the remainder by the Prussians against the fortifications about the city. As regards calibre, 58 were rifled 24-pounders; 80 rifled 12-pounders; 83 mortars, 2 rifled, 8 smooth 60-pounders; 19 50-pounders; the remainder 25 and 7-pounders. The number of shots fired in the 31 days of the actual bombardment was 193,722; among these 58,000 shells, many weighing 180 pounds. The average per day was 6,249 shots; per hour, 269; per minute, 4-5. The operations extended over six weeks; but the formal bombardment began on the 26th of August, ending on the 27th of September.

window is destroyed ; the organ is torn to pieces, while the ceiling is perforated in many places. The clock has escaped altogether, but the wonderful mechanism is now silent. It tells the solar, sidereal, and mean time of the first day of the bombardment ; even its ecclesiastical calendar remains *in statu quo ante bellum*. Its reanimation will, I presume, be an early duty of the Provisional Government of the Alsace. The Germans glory in this architectural masterpiece as their own ; but to make the restoration complete, it should

be in Protestant hands. From its pulpit reformers have preached, and the city about it was one of the strongholds of the pure faith in the sixteenth century. As Gutenberg began to print there, this was to be expected.

Calling to see an intelligent acquaintance in this neighborhood, I had an opportunity of judging respecting the feelings of the better class of the population. "What will become of us," he said, "we know only too well ; we must become German, but no one need say that we will do it willingly." After he had expressed his conviction that France could not resist longer with any hope of success, I inquired whether he thought the nation would learn the proper lesson from its defeat, and introduce a system of popular education. "No," he replied ; "both the priests and the rulers, whatever they may call the form of government, find the ignorance of the peasantry too favorable to their own schemes. They will both try to keep them uneducated."—"A poor outlook for the future," I remarked. "Well," he returned, with that peculiarly French shrug of the shoulders, "France is still in the advance. She has passed through most of her revolutions. They will come in Germany after a while." That seemed to be his only consolation. Yet he was far more moderate than most of the Strasburgers. One terma-



INSIDE THE CITADEL.

gant, whose ire a German acquaintance unfortunately aroused, said, most vehemently : "If General Uhrich, that pitiful scoundrel, had not been a traitor, we could have held out three months longer." And then she fired off such a volley of wrathful epithets against the Emperor, Germans in general, and the parties present in particular, that we were glad to beat a hasty retreat. The greater proportion of the inhabitants still believe that the French have won half a dozen important victories in this war, and insist that the Germans filled their bomb-shells with petroleum and other combustibles.

Even my good landlady shares this opinion. She feels sadly enough. For many years she had been the housekeeper of an old gentleman, who was for sixty years confidential clerk in one of the business houses near the Cathedral. She had been the nurse of his only child until her death, then had tended his invalid wife until she was laid beside her daughter, and cared for him until, at the age of 84, he too was laid in the cemetery of St. Gallen, outside the Saverne gate. In most French cemeteries the lease of the sacred plot is good for five years only. So dear was the memory of this family to her, that when that period expired, she rebought the little enclosure, and continued to watch the flowers

blooming on the three graves. Yet she was poor, then earning her living as a washerwoman, and providing for her invalid son. I once visited that cemetery in company with those who had friends buried there. Returning to the carriage we found the coachman absent. Presently he returned, wiping his eyes. "Ah," said he, "I buried my wife here but last week. Each seeks their own dead!" How many now seek their dead in vain. The Badensers, the countrymen of the good old man I have been speaking of, ran their second parallel through the cemetery; his own people disturbed his resting-place. My good landlady holds the deed for the sacred earth, but who can find the spot now! Thousands are laid this year in nameless graves, far away from those who love them, and thousands lie in desecrated graves, with which the rude demon of war has made sad havoc.

Three hundred years ago there lived in the Suabian mountains a poet named Frischlin. In the romantic Urach valley, not far from where these lines are penned, he was dashed to pieces in attempting to escape from a castle-prison. He sang the praises of Strasburg in rough hexameters, which may be thus roughly reproduced:—

"Strasburg, loveliest grace of our common country,
virtue's
Sacred retreat, harbor of justice, of faith the stout
anchor,

Thee I salute, and the song that I sing thee, here on
the Neckar,
Take, noble city. Oh, listen unto it, with favor regard it.
Never may foe scale thy ramparts and storm thee in
heat of the battle!
Never may plague nor terrible hunger bring desolation
within thee!
But may thy land, ever fruitful, with corn and with
wine still be teeming!
May every house be pervaded by air that refreshes thy
people,
And let the silver-winged angel of peace ever thee
overshadow!"

The German author who has brought this apostrophe to public notice comments thus: "These verses of the old poet can scarcely be read at the present hour without sadness; in some quarters, it may be said, without shame: Yes, mother Germania has severely wounded her own daughter; but she did it against her will, in conflict with the robber who had stolen that daughter away, and from whom she tried to recapture her, as soon as she began to recover from her own protracted bodily weakness. Now and henceforth it will and must be her tenderest solicitude to heal the wounds of her daughter, and through loving care so to cherish her, that the bloom of her days of beauty may return."

So let it be; but her wounds are still open, and time alone can heal them; her French education may make her a wayward and troublesome daughter for staid mother Germania.